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Tenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1886 (2009), 1941 (2010), 2005 (2011) and 2065 (2012), in which the Council requested me to submit a report on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), as well as on detailed proposals and a recommended timeline for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of UNIPSIL following the review by an inter-agency technical assessment mission deployed by me to Sierra Leone. The report covers the period from 1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013 and includes recommendations concerning residual tasks and timelines for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of UNIPSIL.

II. Major developments

2. The key event dominating the period under review was the holding of the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections in Sierra Leone on 17 November 2012. The elections, the third since the end of the civil war in 2002, were considered, both nationally and internationally, to be a success for the people of Sierra Leone and its institutions.

A. Political developments

3. The main political developments were all related to the period before, during and after the national elections. Election campaigning was conducted from 17 October to 15 November, in accordance with a detailed schedule prepared by the National Electoral Commission. Each political party was allocated specific campaign days. Political parties were able to campaign in all parts of the country, although there were a few instances of misconduct and minor incidents of political intolerance during the campaign period, which were effectively handled by the Sierra Leone Police.

4. In keeping with the political antecedents in the country, the main contestants in the elections were the opposition party, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), and the ruling All People's Congress (APC). The other eight political parties contesting the elections were the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), the

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National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Citizens Democratic Party (DCP), the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP), the United National People's Party (UNP) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM). The National Democratic Alliance was unable to field a presidential candidate as it did not meet the National Electoral Commission deadline for all registered parties to present and obtain approval of the nomination of their flag-bearers and running mates.

5. There were no major incidents of political violence on polling day and, overall, the elections were conducted in an atmosphere of calm and in an orderly manner. Voter turnout was 87 per cent of the 2.6 million voters registered under the biometric voter registration system. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the Commonwealth, the European Union, the Carter Center and National Election Watch, a coalition of local civil society organizations which observed the polling and counting, concluded that the elections were largely peaceful, credible and transparent, notwithstanding some organizational difficulties, including the late opening of some polling stations and the late delivery of electoral materials.

6. On 23 November, the National Electoral Commission announced that President Ernest Bai Koroma of the ruling APC had secured almost 59 per cent of the votes cast in the presidential elections and that (retired) Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio of SLPP had won 37 per cent of the votes. The other seven presidential candidates secured the remaining votes. In accordance with the 1991 Constitution, there was no need for a run-off presidential election since one of the candidates, in this case President Ernest Bai Koroma, had obtained at least 55 per cent of the votes cast. President Koroma was sworn into office on 23 November. His inauguration was held on 22 February 2013.

7. On 26 November 2012 and 10 February 2013 respectively, the National Electoral Commission announced the results of the parliamentary and local council elections. According to the results, the ruling APC increased its parliamentary majority from 59 to 68 seats, while SLPP secured 42 seats, down from its previously held 43 seats. The results for two parliamentary seats in Kailahun and Kenema districts, in the eastern region, were not announced by the Commission because of legal challenges involving some of the candidates running for the seats. The ruling party won 10 of the 19 local council seats in the country and SLPP won 9 seats. On 10 February 2013, the Commission announced that APC had won the parliamentary election in "Constituency 92" in the Western Area Rural district, which had been postponed owing to the death of the PMDC candidate just before the November 2012 elections.

8. Immediately following the elections, SLPP alleged that several electoral irregularities had occurred. These included the absence of voter registers in some areas in the northern region, which is the political stronghold of APC; the use of pre-marked ballots in favour of the ruling APC; and the intimidation of SLPP supporters by the police. In a statement issued on 18 November, SLPP declared that it would not accept the results of the presidential election owing to these irregularities. During this period, my Executive Representative and partners from the international community maintained close contacts with SLPP, urging calm and stressing the importance of resolving its concerns through legal mechanisms.

9. On 30 November, SLPP filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone challenging the conduct of the presidential election by the National Electoral Commission. On 3 December, President Koroma and (retired) Brigadier General Bio met and issued a joint statement by APC and SLPP advising that the election of President Ernest Bai Koroma was no longer in contention. SLPP also called upon the Government to release the SLPP supporters who had been arrested for public order offences connected with demonstrations in the southern and eastern parts of the country following the announcements of the election results. SLPP also reversed its earlier decision forbidding its newly elected parliamentarians and local councillors to participate in the work of the Parliament and the local councils. However, in a statement on 1 January 2013 and on subsequent occasions, SLPP declared that it would not accept the presidential election results.

10. After being sworn into office, President Koroma commenced the process of nominating the members of his new Cabinet, who have since been approved by Parliament. On 16 December, the President addressed the State Opening of the first session of the Fourth Parliament and articulated the priorities of his Government, which include constitutional reform, economic diversification, natural resources management, human development, international competitiveness, employment and labour, social protection, governance, gender equality, women's empowerment and youth employment.

B. Technical arrangements in support of the elections

11. Technical and financial assistance was provided to Sierra Leone's electoral management bodies through the Elections Basket Fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with contributions from the European Union, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Nations. The establishment of regional tallying centres equipped with data processing facilities was completed in the three provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni. The centres improved the computation and early announcement of the election results.

12. The National Electoral Commission hired and trained over 70,000 temporary polling staff for the elections. It also established more than 9,440 polling stations throughout the country. Voter education processes, with assistance from the UNDP-managed Elections Basket Fund, were intensified in the reporting period through the use of radio jingles and dramatic sketches. To ensure greater voter participation in the electoral processes, voter registration cards were also distributed by the Commission from 6 to 10 September. On 7 November, the Commission destroyed about 80,000 faulty voter registration cards in a ceremony witnessed by national and international election observers.

1. Electoral offences

13. On 19 and 20 October, the Law Officers Department in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice arranged training programmes on electoral offences for about 200 police and prison officers as well as National Electoral Commission staff. A total of 94 cases relating to double registration were dealt with by the High Court of Sierra Leone, resulting in 83 convictions and 7 acquittals.

Three cases are pending and one was discharged owing to lack of evidence. There are currently seven cases pending before the Electoral Offences Courts.

2. Election security

14. With technical and advisory support from UNIPSIL, the security sector agencies prepared and implemented a comprehensive security plan for the elections. About 12,000 police officers, supported by personnel from the National Fire Force, the Chiefdom Police and the Immigration Service, were deployed in polling stations throughout the country. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) provided safety and logistical support to the Sierra Leone Police within the framework of the Military Aid to Civil Power Policy. On polling day, the police imposed a ban on vehicular movement in some of the regions. The ban was largely respected and assisted in maintaining law and order. Eight additional United Nations Police officers, who were deployed to Sierra Leone from July to December 2012, assisted in monitoring the professional conduct, operational independence and neutrality of the Sierra Leone Police.

3. Support to civil society and non-State actors

15. Through the non-State actors project, which is funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, UNIPSIL engaged a wide spectrum of local groups to build consensus for political tolerance and non-violence during the electoral process. In all 112 of the country's constituencies, civil society organizations developed and disseminated audio and video peace messages in local languages using ex-combatants.

16. On 26 September, with assistance from UNIPSIL, the National Commission for Democracy issued the Declaration of 18 May 2012, which articulates the roles and responsibilities of major local stakeholders, such as youth and women's groups, including the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association, the Police and the political parties, in the electoral process. With the engagement of UNIPSIL, the National Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Interreligious Council for Sierra Leone held discussions with the police and electoral management bodies to address their concerns, such as the neutrality of the security sector agencies and paramount chiefs in the electoral process.

C. Security developments

17. The overall security situation in the country was calm during the reporting period. On 22 September, the Sierra Leone National Commission for Small Arms organized the destruction of 4,773 rifles and guns accumulated between 2004 and 2007 under the UNDP arms for development project.

18. Following a request by the Government of Sierra Leone in June 2012, my Executive Representative has been coordinating support from key international partners for ongoing national efforts in the area of security sector reform. On 17 December, two people were shot dead by the police during disturbances arising from a dispute by workers of a mining company in Koidu, Kono district. This incident, which is under investigation by the Government, coupled with similar past isolated incidents, underlines the need to strengthen command and control, as well as accountability mechanisms in the police, including through the establishment of the proposed independent police complaints mechanism.

III. Socioeconomic developments and activities of the United Nations country team

19. Real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 is expected to be 15 per cent and will be sustained, mainly owing to the start-up of two large iron ore mines in 2011 and 2012 in Tonkolili and Port Loko districts (Northern Province). Other factors supporting the growth in real GDP include the Government's smallholder commercialization scheme, which stimulated agriculture and increased spending on infrastructure development that provided a boost to the construction and services sectors. The trade deficit is forecast to decrease to $121 million or 12 per cent of GDP in 2013 from an estimated deficit of $589 million or 24 per cent of GDP in 2012.

20. The macroeconomic framework for 2013 and beyond is anchored on a sustainable fiscal path with domestic financing of the budget at around 1 per cent of GDP. Fiscal consolidation efforts will continue to be important. In this respect, the Government's goals include creating fiscal space for high priority public investments with a view to stimulating long-term growth and development, as well as ensuring sustainable debt levels. Since inflation is declining and is estimated to attain a single digit of 8 per cent in 2013, monetary policy in 2013 and beyond will continue to target price stability. The exchange rate has also been stable and was strongly supported by capital inflows, notably foreign direct investment in the mining sector.

21. Regarding the "Agenda for Prosperity", Sierra Leone's third poverty reduction strategy paper covering 2013 to 2017, the Government has continued consultations among relevant counterparts aimed at prioritizing projects in each of the eight identified pillars. The United Nations and other development partners are supporting the formulation of the various pillars. The Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are assisting in developing the poverty reduction strategy paper III results framework for tracking its implementation as well as the national monitoring and evaluation system. Serving as co-chair of the Development Partnership Committee with the Government of Sierra Leone, my Executive Representative is supporting the overall coordination of international partners, as well as the coherence and costing of the poverty reduction strategy paper. Civil society representatives received briefings in December 2012 on aspects of the Agenda for Prosperity and plans are under way to launch regional consultations in February 2013 with various stakeholders to increase and promote awareness of the poverty reduction strategy paper III.

22. In support of the Government's free health-care programme for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under the age of five, UNICEF, with funding from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and the European Union, continued to assist in the procurement and distribution of essential lifesaving drugs to over 1,000 primary health-care units. Also in collaboration with the World Bank, UNICEF began developing the social protection strategy and an implementation plan aimed at the most vulnerable communities. It is planning to pilot a cash transfer scheme in some districts. With financial assistance from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the African Development Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF embarked on the distribution of water purifying

tablets and intravenous fluids, as well as awareness-raising activities to combat the spread of cholera.

23. As a result of the smallholder commercialization programme implemented with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the food security situation in the country is improving. In this regard, there are indications that local rice production is increasing with a consequent reduction in rice imports.

IV. Advancing peacebuilding

24. During the reporting period, the Peacebuilding Commission closely followed preparations for the 2012 elections and continued to advocate for the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections. The Chair of the Commission's Sierra Leone configuration briefed the Security Council on 12 September on its activities relating to the elections, possible support to UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team during the post-election transition, and sustaining international assistance to meet Sierra Leone's political and economic priorities. On the eve of the elections, on 15 November, the Commission issued a statement calling upon all national stakeholders to strive to ensure peaceful and impartial elections. On 12 December, the Commission was briefed by my Executive Representative on the conduct of the elections. Subsequently, the Commission issued a statement commending the people and institutions of Sierra Leone on the culmination of a successful electoral process. The Commission stressed the important work ahead to consolidate peace and urged the international community to provide coordinated and coherent support to Sierra Leone.

25. During the reporting period, the Commission also conducted its periodic review of progress in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. The review was based on the second and last joint progress report on the Agenda for Change prepared by the Government in consultation with its international partners and endorsed by the Parliament.

26. The Commission visited Sierra Leone from 15 to 20 February 2013 to discuss its future engagement in the country with national and international counterparts. It plans to brief the Security Council on its findings in March 2013.

V. Main risks to peacebuilding

A. Drug trafficking

27. The Sierra Leone Transnational Organized Crime Unit continued to lead efforts aimed at combating illicit drug trafficking and other forms of international organized crime. In 2012, the Unit reportedly carried out 13 law enforcement operations and investigated 52 cases, including 17 cases of illicit drug trafficking and possession, 5 cases of fraud, financial crimes and money-laundering, 15 cases of larceny and forgery and 1 case of piracy. National capabilities for critical information exchange with other countries, such as Colombia, Guinea, Liberia, Spain and the United Kingdom, have been significantly increased. UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),

continued to provide mentoring, on-the-job training and technical advisory support to the Transnational Organized Crime Unit.

B. Youth

28. In a number of pronouncements, the new Government restated its commitment to tackling youth unemployment and outlined several proposals, including on skills acquisition and the formulation of suitable educational curriculums tailored for the country's employment requirements. Programmatic interventions by UNDP in this area continued in the period under review, including a graduate internship programme, and career and employment advisory units. However, the Government's initiatives will need to be supplemented by an increase in pre-university school entrants and more vocational training and by addressing capacity and institutional gaps. The proposals could also benefit from further coordination of national stakeholders involved in youth issues and a holistic and cross-cutting approach to policy formulation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank are currently providing technical assistance in this area. While international partners should continue to provide assistance, the solution must be found in large-scale interventions, which only the Government can instigate.

C. Corruption

29. The Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission continued its work on education, prevention and enforcement. Its national anti-corruption strategy secretariat held a validation workshop on 15 November 2012 to engage Government entities in the monitoring exercise carried out by civil society groups. In October, the Commission presented two cheques totalling 2.06 billion leones (about $4.2 million), which had been recovered from corrupt individuals, to the Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund. On 7 December, the Commission announced that Sierra Leone ranked 123 out of the 176 countries surveyed in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, as opposed to 134 in 2011. The Commission further stated that the country had improved its rankings with a score of 31 and was making steady progress. Other positive developments in the period under review include a number of successful investigations and prosecutions of public employees involved in corrupt activities. On 17 December, the former Minister for Health was convicted of a number of corrupt practices, such as abuse of office and failure to comply with procurement guidelines. Four public officers were also convicted of corrupt practices and 10 others were indicted during the same period. On 29 January 2013, the Government announced the suspension of 10 senior staff of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation pending investigations into the suspected misuse of funds made available by the GAVI Alliance, a public-private partnership that supports vaccinations for children in developing countries. The Commission is also currently investigating an amount of $1 million provided by GAVI, which allegedly has not been properly accounted for by the Ministry.

VI. Support to and activities of democratic institutions

A. National Electoral Commission

30. In preparation for the elections, the National Electoral Commission received support from the UNDP-managed Elections Basket Fund and bilateral partners. The Government of Nigeria donated 24 vehicles to the Commission to improve its logistics capability and provided $1 million for election activities. It also deployed information technology experts to assist in the electoral arrangements. On 13 December, the Government of China donated 32 laptops, 3 electricity generators, 18 motorbikes and 3 vans to the Commission.

B. Political Parties Registration Commission

31. During the reporting period, the Political Parties Registration Commission monitored the conduct of political parties with a view to ensuring compliance with the Political Parties' Code of Conduct of 20 October 2006. The Government provided funding to enable the Commission to recruit additional personnel to carry out its activities. The Commission held several consultative meetings with political parties and engaged in the resolution of intra-party disputes. It also played a critical role in resolving disagreements over the candidates' nomination fees for the 2012 elections. Working closely with UNIPSIL, it continued to encourage peaceful elections through, inter alia, its engagement with political parties and the implementation of cross-party activities by the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association geared towards promoting a shared understanding of the political process and the development of conflict resolution mechanisms.

C. Independent Media Commission

32. On 26 September 2012, the Independent Media Commission suspended the licences of two media houses for one month for publishing indecent material, which they subsequently challenged in the High Court. UNIPSIL offered legal support to the Commission in the interpretation of its regulatory authority since Parliament is yet to enact a revised Independent Media Commission Act. With technical advice from UNIPSIL, the Commission worked with the Guild of Editors to foster a degree of self-regulation of the media. It facilitated skills-training workshops aimed at encouraging coverage of key political, economic and social issues and put in place a media monitoring mechanism to deter hate speech. On 5 October, and in coordination with the Commission, UNIPSIL organized a round table attended by representatives of the Guild of Editors, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation and other media organizations, during which the need for the media to play a positive role in the elections was underlined. Notwithstanding these efforts, the Commission still requires further strengthening of its capacity, including with respect to the recruitment of experts in critical areas, stronger engagement with the media and the early passage of the revised Independent Media Commission Act to enhance its regulatory authority.

D. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation

33. With support from UNIPSIL and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation established an Elections Unit in September 2012 to cover the electoral process. The Corporation deployed an additional 80 staff throughout the country. While the Corporation's coverage of electoral activities was positive, the major opposition party, SLPP, expressed concern that undue prominence had been given to the ruling party.

E. Parliament

34. In the light of the 17 November elections, Parliament closed on 24 September. The new Parliament was formally inaugurated on 15 December. UNDP organized a one-day orientation programme on parliamentary procedural issues for the newly elected members, who constitute about 70 per cent of the intake. UNDP also facilitated training for newly recruited parliamentary staff.

F. Decentralization

35. Much progress was made in the decentralization process. Some 56 of the 80 functions, including in the areas of health and education, performed by central institutions were transferred to local councils. The Government further pledged to commit to the decentralization process by reviewing the Local Government Act, 2004 and providing direct financial assistance to local councils. It also indicated that additional councils would be created during the new APC administration.

36. The Decentralization Secretariat of the Government of Sierra Leone continued to undertake activities, with assistance from the Decentralized Delivery Service Programme funded by the World Bank, aimed at boosting the decentralization and devolution process. It conducted training in environmental and social safeguards for designated officers from 10 to 13 October 2012 in Bo (Southern Province) and provided computer equipment. Training was also provided on monitoring and evaluation procedures to over 60 staff of local councils, as well as to personnel of State institutions from 30 October to 3 November. As part of the monitoring evaluation processes, initiatives to allow local communities to evaluate service delivery through the use of scorecards commenced during the period under review.

VII. Human rights and rule of law

A. Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

37. On 26 September, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone released its report on the alleged human rights violations committed by the police during demonstrations by miners in Bumbuna, Tonkolili district (Northern Province) in June 2012 over conditions of service, which resulted in the death of one person and serious injuries to several others. The report concluded that there had been a disproportionate use of force by the police, as well as instances of sexual and gender-based violence. The Human Rights Commission issued several recommendations, including the early establishment of an independent police

complaints committee, and requested an apology by the police, which has been provided.

B. International treaty reporting

38. With support from UNIPSIL, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice completed and submitted Sierra Leone's initial periodic report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR/C/SLE/1). The second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture has been submitted (CAT/C/SLE/2).

C. Persons with disabilities

39. UNIPSIL provided assistance to electoral management bodies aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the political process through training programmes organized in Bo and Makeni (Southern and Northern Provinces) on 10 and 13 October. In a very welcome development, a visually impaired deputy minister was appointed in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

D. Technical cooperation

40. On 6 and 7 November, capacity-building workshops were organized by UNIPSIL for staff in four district councils in the Southern Province through the human rights-based approach programme. Plans of action were adopted at the conclusion of the training. Also on 6 November, UNIPSIL held training workshops for civil society on shadow reporting for treaty bodies, with a particular focus on reporting for such human rights treaty bodies as the Human Rights Committee (which monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the Committee against Torture.

E. Gender issues

41. During the elections, women played a critical role in the monitoring of the electoral process through the Women's Situation Room and deployed over 300 observers throughout the country. The work of the Women's Situation Room was supported by the United Nations country team with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the lead. With regard to women's political participation, the National Electoral Commission confirmed a very high turnout of women voters (more than 50 per cent) in the 2012 elections. However, efforts by the All Political Parties Women's Association, supported by the United Nations and other women's groups, to achieve a minimum 30 per cent quota for women in Parliament fell short. There has been a slight decline in the number of women parliamentarians from 16 in the previous Parliament to 15, with 8 from APC and 7 from SLPP. President Koroma recently reiterated his commitment to promoting gender equality and the political participation of women, including through the enactment of legislation on the 30 per cent quota for women and the proposed constitutional review process.

42. In September 2012, UNIPSIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided funds for establishing two information desks in magistrate courts in Freetown and Kenema that will provide guidance and information on free legal aid for cases involving sexual and gender-based violence. In October, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs launched the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence, which have contributed to strengthening the Government's response to sexual and gender-based violence.

VIII. Regional cooperation

43. In the reporting period, Sierra Leone continued to cooperate closely with neighbouring countries, both independently, and within the context of ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, on a range of regional issues. On 11 and 12 December, President Koroma visited Guinea and met with President Alpha Condé. In a communiqué following their meeting, both leaders reiterated their commitment to the liberation of northern Mali and expressed support for the transitional institutions established in Mali. UNIPSIL also continued to provide support to the initiatives of the Mano River Union secretariat to promote understanding among border communities, especially through meetings of the joint border security and confidence-building units with the participation of representatives from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In addition, UNIPSIL supported the Mano River Union in organizing a meeting of electoral commissions from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone to share experience and exchange information on the prevention of electoral violence, which was held in Freetown on 11 September.

IX. Inter-agency technical assessment mission to Sierra Leone

44. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2065 (2012), a United Nations inter-agency technical assessment mission was deployed to Sierra Leone from 14 to 25 January 2013. Led by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, it was comprised of representatives from the Department of Field Support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP and UNODC. The technical assessment mission reviewed progress in the implementation of the UNIPSIL mandate and provided proposals for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of the mission. The technical assessment mission met with a wide range of interlocutors, including the President, his newly appointed Cabinet, representatives of national institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, including youth and women's groups, the international community and the United Nations family in Sierra Leone. It also visited Koidu (Eastern Province) to meet with local authorities and representatives.

45. The technical assessment mission found that Sierra Leone had made remarkable progress. The United Nations has accompanied peace efforts in Sierra Leone through a series of Security Council-mandated operations since 1998. In this regard, UNIPSIL is a well-identified "brand" in the country and is highly regarded and widely trusted for its impartiality by State institutions, political and civil society actors and the population at large.

46. The technical assessment mission ascertained that the recently concluded elections were conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. The results were broadly accepted, despite the objections raised by the main opposition party. However, the elections highlighted once again the regional and ethnic divide and the pervasive lack of trust between the two main political parties (APC and SLPP) and their supporters. Additional challenges remain, including the need to consolidate and strengthen the country's democratic institutions; promote national reconciliation and national cohesion and a culture of political tolerance among the country's political actors; address unemployment, in particular among the young people; enhance the management of the exploitation of the nation's natural resources and extractive industries, including minerals; and combat corruption. There is also a continuing need to address the cross-border challenges posed by transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

47. The United Nations operation in Sierra Leone is structurally integrated, with UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team working together under the overall leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator to implement the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone (2009-2012) and the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014). These joint peace consolidation plans contain programmatic clusters for United Nations support to the Government's Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2017).

48. Sierra Leone has been on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission since June 2006. The Commission has continued to highlight the country's post-conflict needs, advocate for additional assistance and ensure sustained international attention to the peacebuilding process. It is currently focused on providing support in three areas, namely, youth unemployment, drug trafficking, and good governance and the rule of law. The Commission has endorsed the United Nations Joint Vision and is contributing to ensuring coordination and alignment of the work of international partners on the ground.

A. Status of mandate implementation

49. Based on the key messages received from national stakeholders, the United Nations and other international partners, the technical assessment mission ascertained that the status of implementation of the mandated tasks of UNIPSIL is well advanced, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1829 (2008), 1886 (2009), 1941 (2010), 2005 (2011) and 2065 (2012), as well as Security Council Presidential Statements 2012/25, 2012/11 and 2011/4.

50. Regarding its mandate, UNIPSIL has provided assistance and support to the Government of Sierra Leone and its institutions in (a) conflict prevention and mitigation efforts and the promotion of dialogue; (b) consolidation of good governance reforms, focusing on anti-corruption instruments; (c) preparation and conduct of the 2012 elections; (d) meeting the country's peacebuilding and development priorities by strengthening the capacity-building of national political, security, human rights and rule of law institutions, promoting good governance and accountability, promoting gender and social equality, strengthening human rights protection, supporting efforts to improve youth empowerment and strengthening efforts to tackle transnational organized crime; (e) promotion of human rights,

democratic institutions and the rule of law; (f) mitigation of potential cross-border threats; (g) development of initiatives for the protection and well-being of young people, women and children; (h) promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue including by building an independent and capable public radio capacity; (i) engagement with bilateral and international partners as well as with national authorities in the formulation of the Agenda for Prosperity and in coordinating an integrated international response thereto; (j) supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

51. Most of the residual tasks under the UNIPSIL mandate can be progressively transitioned to the United Nations country team, the Government, national institutions, civil society organizations and bilateral and international partners over the next few months. Discussions for the transition of these tasks have already started between UNIPSIL and the country team. Subject to funding, the country team is prepared to take on the residual tasks of UNIPSIL, including enhancing national capacity for conflict prevention, management and recovery, as well as democratic governance; supporting national institutions, including media and non-State actors; combating corruption; addressing youth unemployment; managing the exploitation of natural resources and extractive industries; empowering women and promoting gender equality; and providing technical assistance to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

B. Residual tasks

1. Conflict prevention, mediation and support to democratic institutions

52. Notwithstanding the progress made by UNIPSIL, the Government continues to require support in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and democratic institutions. The most important and immediate task involves stabilizing the post-election political environment. The mission's crisis prevention and mediation efforts, aimed at mitigating potential disputes, will be important during this period.

53. The Government of Sierra Leone has made it a priority to conduct and finalize a constitutional review process by 2014, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Although State governance is the primary responsibility of the Government, there is still a need to provide continued support to the Government and relevant institutions in terms of facilitation and consensus-building in the upcoming constitutional review process, mainly focusing on political advocacy and support to broad consultations.

54. These residual tasks can be best fulfilled through the leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, including in his or her capacity as Resident Coordinator. This would include continuing to play a key role in the coordination of political interventions and advocacy by the international community to ensure coherent international support to the Agenda for Prosperity. It will also be critical for the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator to continue engaging with bilateral and international partners as well as with the national authorities in the formulation of the Agenda for Prosperity and in coordinating an integrated international response.

55. Strengthening of national institutions should continue, according to the various institutions that met with the technical assessment mission, including the Political Parties Registration Commission, the National Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, the National Commission for Democracy, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation and the Independent Media Commission, in order to ensure their sustainability.

2. Security sector reform and cross-border threats

56. While considerable success has been achieved in the process of reform and restructuring of the overall security sector in Sierra Leone, the findings of the technical assessment mission demonstrate that challenges remain in the critical areas of governance, command and control, accountability and oversight, and coordination that warrant continued engagement at the strategic and policy levels. Thus, there is a need for UNIPSIL to continue supporting institutional actors in adopting a democratic and transparent security approach that focuses on being responsive to the population's needs. The United Nations should also remain engaged in broader security sector initiatives, such as the current plans to reconfigure the International Military Advisory Training Team, which is led by the United Kingdom, into the International Security Advisory Team. Support in addressing cross-border issues, while reinforcing such existing coor lination mechanisms as the West Africa Coast Initiative/Transnational Organized Crime Unit, will also be critical since the overall institutional capacity of the country remains limited.

57. In accordance with its mandate, UNIPSIL has played an important role in supporting the Government in its efforts to counter transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. Significant achievements have been made, leading to the growing capacity of national institutions in the areas of internal security and criminal justice. Although initial steps towards consolidation are being undertaken, some gaps remain; if not properly addressed, these gaps can easily jeopardize the considerable progress made so far. Support to and strengthening of strategic planning and coordination in addressing transnational organized crime will thus be critical, especially with respect to ensuring synergies among law enforcement institutions.

3. Human rights and gender

58. UNIPSIL has provided technical expertise, advice and advocacy to strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone; supported the enactment of important pieces of human rights legislation and the establishment of mechanisms to strengthen the national human rights protection framework; supported the Government of Sierra Leone to meet its reporting obligations; and coordinated contributions from other partners to streamline and enhance support to the Government. As such, the Human Rights Commission is now fully compliant with the Paris Principles and has been given international accreditation with "A" status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions. Nevertheless, Government officials and civil society organizations have affirmed that the continued support of UNIPSIL in strengthening national human rights and rule of law institutions would be important. National interlocutors also stressed the importance of ensuring that human rights aspects are sufficiently

addressed in pending and potentially sensitive political processes, such as the envisaged constitutional review process.

4. Overall summary of residual tasks

59. While recognizing that the majority of the residual activities of UNIPSIL could be transferred to the United Nations country team or bilateral partners, the core of its mandate, for good offices, political dialogue and mediation, as well as facilitation of the constitutional review process, can most effectively be fulfilled by the continued presence of United Nations political leadership on the ground. In this regard, the technical assessment mission identified the main benchmarks for the completion of the UNIPSIL mandate and effective transition: (a) reaching an agreement on a draft constitution by initiating and facilitating political dialogue; (b) the establishment of effective oversight and accountability mechanisms and streamlining the coordination, command and control capability of the Sierra Leone Police; (c) completion of the fourth and final phase of the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative/Transnational Organized Crime Unit in Sierra Leone; and (d) a strengthened Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

60. In addition, the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014) contains seven programmatic clusters that will constitute the contribution of the United Nations to the Government's Agenda for Prosperity. The contribution of UNIPSIL during the transition period to the programme clusters, aid effectiveness activities and operations of the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014) will include support to good governance; gender equity and human rights; and integration of the United Nations family and coherence of the international community.

C. Transitional arrangements, timelines and liquidation

61. To build on its achievements and ensure a smooth transition, UNIPSIL will engage in a structured transition of residual tasks to the United Nations country team, bilateral and international partners and the Government of Sierra Leone. In this regard, with effect from 1 April 2013, it is expected that there will be a reduction in the tasks to be carried out by UNIPSIL until the end of its mandate. In anticipation of a refocused and streamlined mandate, UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, should develop drawdown proposals by the end of March 2013. The drawdown proposals will include preparations for staffing drawdown, the transfer of archives to United Nations Headquarters and the liquidation of assets. UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team will also prepare a timeline and benchmarks by the end of March 2013 for the transition of all remaining tasks, including estimated resource plans and requirements covering both programmatic and operational aspects and resource requirements for strengthening the Resident Coordinator function.

62. To enable the United Nations country team to effectively absorb the residual tasks of UNIPSIL, efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible are critical. In order to maintain the level of assistance and raise awareness of the challenges of the transition, the Peacebuilding Commission must be encouraged to play a central and leading role in donor mobilization efforts. Continued investment by the Peacebuilding Fund is critical in supporting national institutions and

non-State actors, strengthening the media, identifying gaps in national capacities and contributing to a United Nations response in respect of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations country team in the security sector, conflict prevention, organized crime, drug trafficking and anti-corruption, as well as strengthening United Nations capacity in the area of human rights and gender equality.

63. The management of perceptions concerning the departure of UNIPSIL from Sierra Leone will be critical for a successful transition. In this regard, UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team will develop a United Nations-wide communication strategy to emphasize that the United Nations system will remain in Sierra Leone even if the mission exits.

D. Support during the transition period and beyond

64. The United Nations family will need to continue to implement the transitional United Nations Joint Vision throughout 2013 and 2014. In the meantime, development of a full-fledged United Nations Development Assistance Framework must commence as soon as possible in order to be ready for implementation in 2015. Since the drawdown of UNIPSIL should not be used as a justification to reduce aid flows to the country, it is critical that donors increase their support to Sierra Leone. UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR will need to lead efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible to enable the United Nations country team to absorb the mission's residual tasks.

65. Providing adequate medical facilities to United Nations staff members is critical, especially where medical capabilities are lacking. UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team operate a joint medical facility that caters to more then 3,000 people, including the diplomatic missions in Freetown. An agreement across the whole United Nations country team regarding cost-sharing of the joint medical facility and its 10 staff is needed; this agreement will define how the facilities can be sustainably funded before the third quarter of 2013.

66. Established in 2009, the United Nations joint field offices play a critical role in assisting local authorities to resolve disputes that could undermine the peace and stability in the regions, especially the hotspots where potential conflict could arise. These field offices cater to all United Nations country team members and each regional field office is managed by one partner, while common costs are shared among them. The transition of the field offices must be taken into full consideration as UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team undertake the transition, given that the sustainability of field offices for agencies depends on the availability of funding.

67. At the end of the mission's mandate, a smooth transition of the United Nations leadership function from the departing Executive Representative of the Secretary-General to the incoming Resident Coordinator must be ensured, with no or minimal interruption. The Resident Coordinator's office must be appropriately staffed to address political analysis, strategic planning, security sector reform and public information. A Peace and Development Adviser should be urgently deployed during the UNIPSIL transition phase. Concerning human rights, OHCHR and other relevant agencies will reflect on the appropriate modality for the continued United Nations engagement on human rights issues in Sierra Leone at the end of the transition,

including the possibility of a country office or the deployment of a Human Rights Adviser to the United Nations country team. The work of the Resident Coordinator would be complemented with the political support of the United Nations Office for West Africa, notably in the area of good offices.

X. Observations and recommendations

68. Sierra Leone has made significant progress since 2002, with the support of the United Nations. Over the 15 years of its operations in Sierra Leone, the United Nations supported the Government, civil society organizations and national institutions and organizations in the implementation of peace agreements, the holding of three free, fair and credible elections, national recovery, transition to a more comprehensive peacebuilding agenda, promoting good governance and human rights, and building the capacity of national institutions. All these achievements were possible owing to the close collaboration among the successive Governments of Sierra Leone, the people of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, as well as the continued engagement of the country's international partners.

69. The recent elections demonstrated the continued deepening of democratic transformation in the country, achieved through the strong commitment of the people of Sierra Leone and its successive Governments and institutions, with the support of bilateral and international partners. I commend Sierra Leone's institutions, in particular the National Electoral Commission, the Sierra Leone Police and the Political Parties Registration Commission, for their lead roles in the electoral process.

70. Sierra Leone's economy has continued to show progress; however, ensuring adequate standards of living for the vast majority of the citizenry and overcoming poverty and providing employment for young people continues to be a challenge. While revenues from the country's extractive industries are expected to improve in the coming years, implementation of the Government's Agenda for Prosperity will continue to require the support of Sierra Leone's international partners. Continuing to build the confidence of the citizenry, fully achieving the country's development goals, and continuing efforts to combat corruption remain vital. I applaud the Anti-Corruption Commission for its multi-pronged approach to combating corrupt practices and encourage it to continue these efforts and maintain the momentum.

71. While the successful conduct of the elections was commendable, the experience nonetheless highlighted the regional and ethnic divide in the country and the need to accelerate efforts to promote national cohesion. I urge the political leaders of Sierra Leone to come together in the national interest and build on their shared values in promoting national unity. In that respect, I welcome President Koroma's initiative regarding a review of the 1991 Constitution that will, inter alia, examine ways of fostering a greater sense of national cohesion. I also welcome the suggestions from the Government and the national authorities regarding a review of aspects of the country's electoral processes with a view to ensuring a more inclusive system of governance.

72. The constitutional review process will provide an opportunity for strengthening governance mechanisms in Sierra Leone, while enhancing the independence of the country's democratic institutions. In that connection, the early passage of the Political Parties Registration Commission reform legislation will

enable it to provide greater oversight of political parties. I encourage the establishment of an independent police complaints committee and a revised Media Code of Practice, which would enhance the country's democratic processes.

73. As part of the planned constitutional review process, I welcome the commitment of President Koroma to ensure that the Gender Equality Bill is passed and that necessary amendments are considered to enhance the rights of women and to increase their participation in the political process. Civil society remains an essential component of democracy; efforts aimed at strengthening civil society must therefore be continued.

74. Despite the real signs of progress in the country, there are serious residual challenges, including strengthening the capacity of security sector agencies, combating transnational organized crime and drug trafficking and the proposed constitutional review process. Support in addressing these challenges will require a reconfiguration of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office for Sierra Leone.

75. It will be important to ensure that there are adequate resources, including logistical capabilities, to enable the United Nations country team to carry out additional activities and programmes during the transition of UNIPSIL and after its liquidation. The continuation of field presences will also require funding. In addition, once UNIPSIL departs, the Office of the Resident Coordinator must be strengthened in terms of human and financial resources for the implementation of follow-on activities. As such, I have asked United Nations system entities, particularly UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, to lead efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible to enable the United Nations country team to absorb the residual tasks of UNIPSIL. I also encourage the Peacebuilding Commission to help to sustain international support for Sierra Leone and to engage in resource mobilization efforts, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, to address part of the shortfall on a cost-sharing basis. I also call upon all international partners to assist in building the capacity of Sierra Leone's democratic institutions and to support the implementation of the country's Agenda for Prosperity.

76. Taking into account the conclusions of the review conducted by my technical assessment mission, I recommend that the mandate of UNIPSIL be extended for a period of 12 to 18 months. This period is critical for the mission to consolidate the gains it has accomplished so far by refocusing its mandate on the three critical remaining areas: (a) good offices and the facilitation of political dialogue towards a constitutional review process and towards strengthening conflict prevention and resolution processes; (b) security sector support; and (c) strengthening of human rights institutions. This period is also critical to transition the mission's residual tasks seamlessly to the United Nations country team and to ensure that the latter has adequate resources.

77. It is my intention to keep developments in Sierra Leone under close review and to make the necessary adjustments to the transition of UNIPSIL and follow-on United Nations country team presence as the milestones identified in paragraphs 52 to 63 above are reached.

78. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate President Koroma and his new Government on the progress made in consolidating peace in the country. I also wish to thank the Government and people of Sierra Leone for their continued cooperation

with the United Nations. I am grateful to Sierra Leone's international development partners for their generous support to the country's peacebuilding process. I thank my Executive Representative, Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, and the staff of UNIPSIL, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other international partners, for their continued collaboration with UNIPSIL in the discharge of its mandate.